

UNITED KINGDOM AND NEW ZEALAND: STATEMENT ON ANTARCTIC CO-OPERATION PRIORITIES TO 2028

The United Kingdom and New Zealand:

Recalling that they were amongst the 12 original signatories to the Antarctic Treaty and have the strongest possible shared commitment to the peaceful and scientific use of Antarctica;

Noting the shared history of Antarctic exploration and achievement between the two countries and their countries' enduring Antarctic connections;

Noting the shared commitment to the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment and to the implementation of the Protocol on Environmental Protection;

Noting further the shared commitment to full implementation of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);

Desiring to further enhance the resilience and strength of the Antarctic Treaty system,

Desiring further to protect the integrity of the Antarctic Treaty system, in light of wider geopolitical challenges in the multilateral space;

Recognising the significant environmental challenges – including in the form of rapid climate change – affecting parts of Antarctica;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Paris Agreement, the Glasgow Climate Pact and meeting Net Zero emissions by 2050;

Noting the value in exploring opportunities to strengthen future scientific research in Antarctica, including recognising both countries' status as Associate Members of Horizon Europe; and

Noting further the improved scientific capabilities available via the United Kingdom's Antarctic Modernisation Programme and new polar research vessel, RRS *Sir David Attenborough* and New Zealand's redevelopment of Scott Base;

have identified the following priority areas to further underpin their close co-operation on Antarctic and Southern Ocean issues, for the period 2024 to 2028:

1. Annual Antarctic dialogue

Representatives of the Polar Regions Department in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in the United Kingdom and representatives of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, together with the British Antarctic Survey and Antarctica New Zealand as appropriate, will meet annually to review progress against the priority areas set out in this statement, and to plan future work. These meetings will normally take place on the margins of the annual Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), or meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

2. Scientific cooperation

The British Antarctic Survey and Antarctica New Zealand, and other relevant organisations in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, will explore the potential for scientific collaboration, including the possibility of joint projects and the practicability of secondments/exchanges of researchers and support staff between the two National Antarctic Programmes. The United Kingdom and New Zealand signed a Research, Science and Innovation Arrangement in 2022 to strengthen scientific engagement at a government level and note that ‘Oceans and Climate Change’ is a current priority for future cooperation, which may include Antarctic research. As of 2024, the United Kingdom and New Zealand are also both Associate Members of Horizon Europe, which provides a funding pathway for large multi-national research projects, and which both countries will promote to Antarctic researchers. The British Antarctic Survey and Antarctica New Zealand will seek to identify options for collaboration in the margins of meetings of the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes (COMNAP) and at other opportunities where appropriate.

3. Operational experience and environmental protection and management

Whilst recognising that their National Antarctic Programmes usually operate in different Antarctic regions, both countries believe there to be value in sharing operational knowledge and best practice in a collaborative manner, particularly in relation to the challenges of operating in Antarctica in a warming climate, in respect of search and rescue issues, and as both countries undertake major modernisation programmes of their Antarctic infrastructure. In particular, the British Antarctic Survey and Antarctica New Zealand, and other relevant organisations in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, will explore opportunities for collaboration on environmental protection and management, including on contributions and proposals for the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), the possibility of joint projects and the practicability of secondments/exchanges.

4. Antarctic Treaty System

i) Shared history and policy objectives

Both the United Kingdom and New Zealand have sovereign rights in Antarctica, which are preserved under Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty. Both countries have a keen interest in the good governance and effective administration of their respective Antarctic territories, and of the Treaty System itself. Both countries will work to share and promote accurate information about the Antarctic Treaty System with the public, dispelling incorrect narratives such as the expiry of any of the instruments of the Antarctic Treaty System. As original signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, both countries have specific and shared interests in the future of Antarctica, and will work together to develop policy proposals, both to the CEP/ATCM and CCAMLR, that uphold and strengthen the objectives of the Antarctic Treaty System, particularly in the face of geopolitical challenges, and to ensure that their long-term interests are appropriately represented.

ii) Inspections

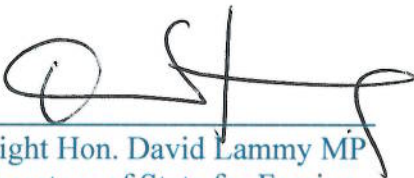
The United Kingdom and New Zealand have a strong record of support for the key principles of the Antarctic Treaty System, and are committed to advocating that all Treaty Parties adhere to the principles of the Treaty and their obligations under the Protocol, including through sharing information on Antarctic developments, particularly any that give rise to security concerns, and by carrying out Antarctic Treaty inspections. Both countries will explore future opportunities to carry out joint Inspections in support of the Antarctic Treaty System and to promote transparency.

iii) Marine conservation

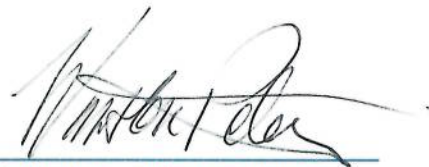
The United Kingdom and New Zealand are committed to the objective and principles of the CCAMLR Convention and will continue to work together to develop, promote and seek the adoption of enhanced conservation measures. Both countries are committed to the elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing from the Southern Ocean. As a priority, we will work with CCAMLR Members to establish Marine Protected Areas in the Antarctic Peninsula, East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea. Both countries will also work to adopt ambitious and enhanced conservation measures in relation to other marine protected areas, climate change and improved fishing practices. The United Kingdom and New Zealand will also work with likeminded CCAMLR Members to counter resistance and build consensus for such measures.

5. Cultural and heritage exchange

The United Kingdom and New Zealand have a strong history of exploration and scientific endeavour in Antarctica, dating back to the heroic age of Antarctic exploration. The United Kingdom and New Zealand have shared management responsibility for the Historic Sites and Monuments in the Ross Dependency from the early Scott and Shackleton expeditions of the early 20th century, and will encourage their respective Heritage Trusts to continue to deepen their relationship on heritage management issues. Representatives of the United Kingdom and New Zealand will pursue further opportunities for closer collaboration to develop, promote and share the best practice that both countries have developed for preserving their Antarctic heritage.



Right Hon. David Lammy MP
Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs



Right Hon. Winston Peters
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign
Affairs

29 November 2024